

Ynformes de Sn. Jn. Bautista

Dedicated to the Preservation of Our Mission's Historical Resources



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The Old Mission Museum

By Ruben G. Mendoza, Project Manager

During the course of the past two months the SJB Mission Conservation Program has worked to complete the final inventory, barcoding, and photography of all Museum and Archives Room specimens. So that we might best identify, track, and properly exhibit existing museum materials, the *PastPerfect* museum catalog effort has shifted focus from the Archives Room into the Old Mission Museum. The former Curator of the *Valdez Museum and Historical Archive*, Mr. James Perry, and CSU Monterey Bay graduate student Ms. Shari Harder have worked diligently to complete the inventory, catalog, and barcoding of all specimens currently housed in the Old Mission Museum. To that end, you might have noticed that the temporary manila-colored inventory tags that once hung from many museum artifacts are nearly all gone. In their place, James and Shari have placed inventory (object ID) barcodes in anticipation of a redesign and redevelopment of the Old Mission Museum and its exhibits. Thankfully, the searchable (photo-enhanced) database will permit the rapid identification and tracking of museum objects and materials suitable to specific exhibits and design plans.



CSU Monterey Bay grad student and curatorial assistant Shari Harder manages the *PastPerfect* database, while curatorial technician James Perry identifies specimens. Photo © Ruben G. Mendoza, 2006.

Museum Cabinetry

Where the redevelopment of the Old Mission Museum is concerned, we recently contracted with a new carpenter to see through the completion of the wooden platform for the Atascadero Mission Model originally constructed in the mid-1950s. Because we wish to retain as much of the historical character of the Old Mission Museum as possible, we are also coordinating the retrofit and modification of both existing and recently acquired antique cabinets with San Juan resident Morgan Halla. Morgan will soon begin efforts to fabricate a work station for the computer that houses the Old Mission Museum visual database located in the Archives Room. This space-saving addition will permit us to introduce one additional table into the study area of the Archives Room. In addition, we will soon see through the design, retrofit, and fabrication of new pedestals for two antique cabinets, and the Victorian period cross that was once affixed to the steeple of the 1860s era bell tower that once stood to the south of the Church portico.

A New Gift Shop in the Works

On Monday, May 8th of 2006, the SJB Mission Conservation Program coordinated the visit of Jeff Grant of Trio Design. Jeff's task was the development of a user-friendly makeover of the former Padre's Kitchen...now intended to house the new Gift Shop. For a variety of reasons, including limited storage, tourist traffic bottlenecks resulting from the presence of a single doorway connecting each portion of the current Gift Shop, and the desire to create both an Orientation Room and a Mutsun Heritage area, it was decided back in March that such a move would be facilitated before the end of the year. Jeff Grant's design plans were approved, and in August, Henry and Irene Schultz of San Juan Woodworks were contracted to see through the fabrication of cabinetry for the new Gift Shop that will soon occupy the former Padre's Kitchen. In our efforts to prepare for the Gift Shop move, we are also coordinating the completion of a furnace install initiated this past summer, as well as paint and stucco enhancements in the former Guadalupe Kitchen. Once the last of the heating system duct work is complete, the

new furnace will be activated in time for the winter season, and all renovations will be completed for the Gift Shop move in December. Ultimately, we anticipate that the aforementioned cabinetry currently being fabricated will be completed in time for a re-scheduled December move. We will nevertheless provide updates on the Gift Shop move as they become available.



View of the approved Gift Shop makeover for the former Padre's Kitchen. Design plan by Jeff Grant of TRIO Designs, 2006.

Bells, Lies, and Videotape

In an effort to create a documentary record of the many projects undertaken by the SJB Mission Conservation Program at the Old Mission, we have endeavored to produce both digital still images and video of most project initiatives. In addition, San Juan residents, Ken



Matthew Halla shoots high definition video footage of Brother Larry Scrivani identifying religious objects in the Music Room of the Old Mission Museum. Photo © Ruben G. Mendoza, 2006.

Halla, and his son, Matthew, have both volunteered a good deal of time to see through the shooting of high definition video covering project developments, as well as interviews with project consultants. We anticipate editing raw footage produced to date into a video documentary regarding project discoveries and progress in seeing through the historic preservation of the Old Mission and Museum. Some of that footage produced will in turn provide insights from textiles conservators, such as Meg Geiss-Mooney, and other consultants on best practice for museum conservation...something needed for training future curatorial personnel and staff at San Juan Bautista.



Engineer Fred Webster reviews seismic strengthening needs with Clancy D'Angelo and SJB Finance Committee member Joe Smith. Photo © Ruben G. Mendoza, 2006.

Volunteers, Consultants, and Good Samaritans

In our efforts to best assess project and SJB site needs for the coming year, we have recruited a number of volunteers and experts specific to everything ranging from museum design and artifact conservation to adobe architecture and retrofitting. Among those who have contributed time and effort to assisting us in assessing current needs at the Old Mission are such noted experts as Nels Roselund and Fred Webster. Nels may well be the "Red Adair" of adobe conservation and retrofitting, and his expertise is currently at the forefront of the heroic effort to save Mission San Miguel...which was severely damaged during the San Simeon quake of 2003. Fred Webster, whose expertise lies with the engineering and retrofit of adobe architecture, also made a site visit this past week with an eye to advising the project and parish on conservation and preservation needs pertaining to the *Convento* adobe. I have in turn attended a host of workshops, including the recent *Getty Adobe Seismic Strengthening Workshop* held September 14-15, 2006.